

CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF ICOMOS

This brings us to the end of our meeting. During the whole of this week we have worked together, we have been able to make new friends, and, under the conduct of scholars who are also poets, we have visited gardens such as we imagine only in our dreams. As we return home our eyes and our whole being will be filled with a mass of welcome impressions, of culturally important acquisitions, of deeply enriching human experiences.

The subject of Islamic gardens has afforded us, in effect, an occasion not merely for tackling a scientific problem of extreme importance and rarely-encountered difficulty, but also for meeting together for further comparison of our ideas on the problems of our responsibility towards the cultural heritage of the past as a whole. And for doing so in so exceptionally difficult an area as that of historic gardens – an area in which the archaeological element is intimately associated with that other element which is continual life, constant transformation – the presence of a vegetation which persistently grows and renews itself.

The primary aim of our meeting was to determine what was the historical element serving as a basis for our studies and conservation work and what were the limits circumscribing it. I feel that our approach to the whole problem must be along two distinctly separate paths. The first of these will involve as near an approach as possible to the historical facts, via the study of archives, historical records, and stratigraphical and palynological data. The second is directed towards a solution to the problem of conserving a garden and, in certain circumstances, restoring it.

With regard to the first of these two branches of study, it is well to stress that such work must never serve as a prelude to a reconstruction which is more or less a work of pure fancy; it must give us no more than the material for the kind of design which may at most be represented on paper (as a perspective drawing or axonometric projection), or as a small-size model. What we will thus achieve will be the outline or idea of a given garden at a given period, as obtained in the light of the knowledge and research of a given moment.

But I wonder whether we may consider such a result to be a work of restoration? Though the Venice Charter is a document intended to apply to more stable works of art, and despite the fact that gardens comprise, over and above their stable structure, an element which, though vital, is liable to transformation, its general provisions cannot be cast aside even in the present instance. Hence the problem is that of achieving an equilibrium in which sensibility, taste and the living process must be circumscribed and enclosed within the context of a monument which, taken as a whole, must be considered stable. In the Islamic garden the growth element is treated, at least in part, as an architectural factor, and hence the problem

of conserving and restoring it involves very considerable difficulty. In the Italian garden the vegetation is treated statically, and forced back within the limits of the geometrical forms man has chosen for it; in the Islamic garden this is only partially so.

Within what limits, then, may we take action to "restore" a historic garden. This is the problem which the experts must examine, and which I would propose as a subject for one of our forthcoming meetings.

The gardens of Granada have provided us with a unique field for observation and meditation. This celebrated place has revealed to us - mainly thanks to the explanations provided by our Spanish colleagues - all its secrets, all its lyricism, all its sacredness. We have been enabled to see the heights attained by an artistic enterprise testifying to a refinement of culture which could have manifested itself nowhere else than in Granada, that cradle and crossroads for civilizations of far distant origin blossoming anew after fertilization from a local plant of exceptional vigour rooted in its native soil. For I feel, indeed, that the time has come to research more deeply into the question of how far the Spanish Islamic garden was influenced at its creation by the pre-Islamic Iberian element.

But to return to our meeting of these last few days: it is with the greatest pleasure that we observe it to have been a complete success. The number of participants - 30 in all, representing fourteen countries from among those most concerned by the problem* - the standard of the papers presented, the regularity of the attendance at the sessions (for you will have noticed that the hall was always full), the number of those taking part in the discussion, and the invariable pertinence and pointedness of their remarks, and above all else the passionate interest the proceedings aroused, all go to show how extremely important and topical our subject turned out to be. We were able, while listening to the discussion, to increase our knowledge of the subject to a considerable extent, and for this we are grateful in the first place to those experts who were kind enough to accept our invitation to read papers on the different problems arising out of the conservation of the gardens of Islam.

The gratitude of ICOMOS is also due to those younger participants from one country or another who, by the original approach to the problem reflected in their speeches or observations, helped to make this meeting of ours more alive and more profitable.

I feel an attempt should be made briefly to recall the substance of the various papers we have heard, in the order in which they were presented, in order to derive a unified picture of the problem from everything that has been said. I am obliged here to give only an outline of each, and I would ask you in advance to accept my apologies for the unavoidable omissions.

Our first speaker, Mr. René Pécère, succeeded in giving us the full benefit of his UNESCO mission to Iran; beginning with the concrete examples of gardens he was able to study on the spot, he found in these a number of major subjects of research, which could then serve as guidelines for the work of our symposium.

Mr. Ya'qub Daneschdoust, of Teheran, who is an architect and town-planner, dealt with the gardens of Iran, and gave us an extremely clear account, with diagrams to illustrate it, of the general principles underlying their composition.

Mrs. Elena Micoulina, a lecturer in architecture at the Moscow Architectural Institute, gave us an account of the progress achieved to date in archaeological research on the gardens of

* Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, German Federal Republic, India, Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.S.A. et the U.S.S.R.

Samarkand. This research, which is being pursued under the directorship of Mrs. Pugachenkova, is based on literary sources, paintings and miniatures, with the findings of the archaeologists serving to provide supplementary data. We are delighted to hear that for her work on gardens Mrs. Pugachenkova has now been granted the assistance of a young landscape-architect.

Another architect, Mrs. Gonül Aslanoglu Evyapan, lecturer at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, gave us the history of the Turkish garden in Anatolia and acquainted us among other things, with the Topkapi gardens in Istanbul. She also emphasized the fondness of the Turkish population for outdoor life. We most particularly appreciated the trouble she had taken to provide us with unpublished documentary material, especially miniatures.

Professor Fernando Chueca Goitia, who holds a Chair in Art History at Madrid University, gave us a theory of his own concerning the Arab gardens of Spain: he assigned special importance to the problems connected with the relations between man and nature and between gardens and architecture, illustrating his remarks with examples taken from the Alcazar at Seville and dating from the Almohad period.

The Director and Curator of the Royal Alcázars of Seville, Mr. Rafael Manzano Martos, gave us an exhaustive study of the excavations carried out in an Almohad patio of the Alcazar. He showed us several views of the "Huerta del Rey", the garden still surrounding the Charterhouse in Seville which still retains its Arab lay-out and traces of the norias.

Mr. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat, a landscape-architect and town-planner from Ahmedabad in India, described the development of Indian Islamic gardens, stressing the relations which had existed between the Islamic and Hindu cultures. We learned from him of the existence of Islamic gardens, stressing the relations which had existed between the Islamic and Hindu cultures. We learned from him of the existence of Islamic gardens in his country even earlier than the Moghul period. His illustrations - plans, photographs and miniatures - were particularly interesting.

A landscape-architect from Porto, Mr. Ilidio Alvas de Araujo, offered us a highly personal and most interesting point of view, stressing the decisiveness of the influence of ecological factors on the art of garden design. He also recalled the obvious importance of the Roman tradition and of local cultures as factors instrumental in creating the Mediterranean patio garden.

The Director of the Hispano-Muslim Museum of the Alhambra, Mr. Jesús Bermúdez Pareja, dealt with the role assigned to water in Islamic gardens. In a paper characterized at once by its clarity and its poetic content, he brought home to us the subtlety of the seemingly very simple effects obtained by the fountains and other water devices.

Mr. Antonio Fernández Puertas, an expert on Arabic epigraphy, gave us some specific details of the Arabic technical vocabulary used in connection with gardens. Particularly remarkable was his revelation of the documentary value of the poems which decorate the walls of the Alhambra.

Our warmest thanks are due to Mrs. Joaquina Eguaras Ibáñez, Curator of the Granada Museum and sometime lecturer at the Granada School of Islamic Studies, for her valuable analytical study of a 14th-century treatise on architecture and gardens which she has just translated into Spanish.

And we are deeply grateful to Professor Josefa Menéndez Amor, Head of the Palynology Laboratory of Madrid University, for the immense trouble she took, at a moment's notice, to prepare a rapid but absolutely precise account of the potentialities offered by the analysis of pollens for the archaeological study of no-longer-existent gardens.

Professor Luis Ruidor Carol, of the Barcelona School of Architecture, posed with exemplary clarity the problem of the choice of plants for ancient gardens, and somewhat humourously drew our attention to the anachronisms daily committed in this respect. We are greatly indebted to him for the lists of plants he was kind enough to prepare for the purposes of our symposium with their classifications under geographical origin and date of introduction into Europe.

Professor Eassegoda Nonell, also of the Barcelona School of Architecture, showed us in most brilliant paper how - as evinced by the visionary art of a Gaudi - right down to the present day the Islamic influence had continued to exert itself on the Spanish genius.

Of those who have been attending as observers, several, you will have noted, have made important contributions to the Historical Monuments of France, had some very pertinent remarks to make on the connection between the period at which a garden had originated and the plants to be found growing in it, and we will also bear in mind his desire to have a study made of the influence which the Byzantine garden must have had on those of several Islamic countries.

Professor Domingo Sánchez Mesa, who holds a Chair in History of Architecture at Granada University, drew our attention to the difficulties encountered by private owners who wish to keep their gardens up satisfactorily. In Granada, he told us, the "Carmenes" are legally considered as building land, and taxed as such! He considered that fiscal measures to help such owners were desirable.

Mr. Leandro Silva, who is a landscape-architect and a lecturer at the Madrid Restoration Institute, emphasized the way in which the patio garden had spread throughout the world and notably over Latin America, and the need to preserve it in such outlying regions as well as nearer home. He also shared Mr. Feray's regret that the choice of plant-species to be grown in ancient gardens should be guided by economic considerations at the expense of authenticity.

Professor Giuseppe Zander, of the architecture faculty at Genoa University, told us of his concern over the need to observe the principles of the Venice Charter in connection with ancient gardens, and the problems this involved; it must without question be admitted that here too we were in no position to recreate artificially what had ceased to exist.

It is sad to have to remark on the absence of those experts we were expecting from the countries in the Arab world affected by war. But it is undeniable that, thanks to the keenness of all our participants and the exceptional interest they have taken in our discussions, we shall be leaving Granada in the knowledge of having done a good job.

If it may be permitted to attempt to pick out a few guiding principles which emerge from our proceedings here, there are two I would like to stress.

The first of these is the crucial importance at the present moment of the conservation of Islamic gardens as a part of the more general policy of protecting historic gardens and fitting them into modern life. It is indeed undeniable that the existence of such privileged spots is becoming more and more essential to the physical and moral equilibrium of a mankind crushed by present-day civilization and threatened by it with actual annihilation.

The second conclusion I would draw is that future ICOMOS activity in the historic gardens sector should be directed towards the following three ends:

- a) Cataloguing of all the historic gardens in existence throughout the world, each with its description and summary documentation;

- b) Exploitation of archaeological and documentary research of all types and of all other available sources, with a view to improved knowledge of ancient gardens;
- c) Restoration of ancient gardens. This heading should also cover establishment of the general principles which should guide our work, the purposes behind such restoration and the limits to be set to it, in conformity with the doctrine set out in the Venice Charter.

And now it is my pleasurable duty to start to thank you all

I would like, first of all, to express our profound gratitude to the highest-level Spanish authorities and to the institutions which have been kind enough to grant us their patronage and to help to finance our symposium. Here I would mention His Excellency Don Julio Rodríguez Martínez, Minister of Education and Science, Don Florentino Pérez Embid, Director-General of Fine Arts, who is also Chairman of the Patronato de la Alhambra, the Commissioner-General of the Artistic Heritage, Don Jesús Silva Porto, the Assistant Commissioner-General for the Artistic Heritage, Don Alberto García Gil, the "Patronato de la Alhambra", whose guests we are, the "Consejo Superior de los Colegios de Arquitectos de España", represented here by its Chairman, Mr. González Cebrian, and the "Colegio de los Arquitectos" of Eastern Andalusia; and the Spanish National Committee of ICOMOS, whose Chairman, Don Gabriel Alomar Esteve, has taken so very active a part in our proceedings.

Our warmest thanks are next due to those who took charge of the practical organization of the symposium and of the preparation of its programme of work. Mr. René Péchère, who was one of these, contrived, through the vehicle of his report on the gardens of Iran, to give us the philosophical basis of our meeting. It is true that the ball Mr. Péchère set rolling when he arranged the Fontainebleau symposium is now travelling on of its own accord, but for a long time yet, as I would remind you, it will need him to steer its course!

The other principal organizer was Mr. Francisco Prieto Moreno, Curator of the Alhambra and Generalife, whose paper introduced us to the Nasrid gardens of the Alhambra and who arranged so magnificent a programme of sightseeing, first in Granada itself and then at other points in Andalusia. To him and to his assistants, who bore the heavy burden of the practical arrangements for the symposium, we express our most grateful thanks. Permit me, too, to mention here Mr. Bermúdez Pareja, whom I would like to thank for his remarkable introduction to the Alhambra and Generalife; his lively and learned comments were listened to by all of us with passionate interest.

And now I would like to thank all those who contributed to our work and our discussions, and here I would include the Chairmen of our working sessions, Mr. Pérez Embid, Director-General of Fine Arts, and Messrs. Péchère, Cebrian, Ruidor, Baghwat, Feray, García Gil, and Silva Porto; the members of the Drafting Committee, Messrs. Baghwat, Cebrian, Feray, García Gil, Péchère and Prieto Moreno; the ICOMOS Secretariat, represented by Mrs. Pascal Grémont; and also our charming Spanish secretaries, whose presence we have so much appreciated, and our interpreters who, both during the working sessions and during the guided visits, have done a remarkable job.

And, lastly, to all of you present here I would like to say, on behalf of ICOMOS, a hearty "Thank you" for the interest you have shown in the proceedings and the exemplary way you have attended every session. Our Spanish friends may rest assured that their hospitality and gesture of friendship and brotherhood will not be forgotten: for all of us the memory of Granada will remain a truly wonderful memory. "A bientôt!"

Mr. Jesús Silva Porto then rose to express his satisfaction at the high standard achieved by the work of the symposium, and the interesting nature of both the papers read and of the discussions, during which some very frank exchanges of opinion had been possible.

He most warmly thanked all those who had helped to organize the meeting, both abroad and in Spain itself, including in particular the authorities in Granada, the Patronato de la Alhambra y del Generalife, and Mr. Prieto Moreno.

The symposium was brought to a close at 8.30 p.m